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Interview with Carol Parent at her home on Main Street in Cranston, RI

Interviewer: Elizabeth Greenberg

Lizzie Greenberg: Ok, so, I'm Lizzie Greenberg and I'm here with Carol Parent who grew up in Fox Point, RI. Just so you know this recording is going to be available to Brown and anyone who wants to use Brown's resources. That's fine with you?

Carol Parent: Oh yeah, sure.

Greenberg: So you were born in the Cranston Hospital, and you grew up in Rhode Island?

Parent: It was actually Pawtucket, which is right outside of Providence, um, back then it was a very family oriented neighborhood, my um, well I'm Portuguese so we'd say my vovor, that's the Portuguese word for grandmother, she owned the house and it was a tenement house and when my mother and father had me we came and we lived with her and she lived um, upstairs and we lived downstairs and I think, I'm almost positive, that at one point we actually lived in the attic until they finished something, but across the street my grandfather, my mother's father, owned that house and my aunts and cousins lived there and at one point they lived down at the side of us, and my father's parents rented a house diagonal, so, what I'm saying is that everybody knew each other. I think there was an uncle, I can't remember his name I think it was uncle Pete, lived on the side in a tenement house, and back of us was old aunt Mary Diego, it's just, it's just there's just so many relatives on just that one street, but I don't remember a lot of it and I really never questions my parents too much about it. I want to say that in the 60's where I grew up a lot of people were poor and it was a very poor neighborhood so the idea was to try to get out of the neighborhood and I hate to say that, it sounds terrible, but I think a lot, a lot of big cities and towns there was a lot of urban decay and so basically you wanted to leave. I did go to school there. And I think I told you on the phone that I think I was part of a um, a start of something called Head Start, it was, a, I think it was a federal program if you want to look that up and I think what it was it wanted to give kids a head start in school. So besides going to kindergarten I went to school a year before that and it could have even been two years before that, I'm not sure, um, so I did go to Fox Point Elementary and that's where I went there and I do remember a little bit of it. I remember the hallways going at a slant and I saw on the news that they had the um, a big, a thing of all portraits of people that lived in Fox Point and it was on the news so I saw some of the stuff, of the kids standing in the hallway and that did bring back memories. I remember in kindergarten that um we would have nap time and I remember we would have these little cubbies, there's a lot of little things I remember, I always thought the

funniest thing, a little anecdote that I have about Fox Point is it must have been my 6th or 7th birthday I took all my money that I had gotten for my birthday and I remember to this day it was thirteen dollars and I had it in a little pocketbook that was attached to my dress and I remember showing somebody and the teacher, she was just aghast, “why do you have so much money?” and she sent me to the office which was probably the only time I ever went to the office, to give it to the secretary to put in the safe, and I guess that would be equivalent to a maybe a 6 year old going to school with a hundred dollars, I don’t know. I remember that. Um, there’s not much I remember, there was a Fox Point pool, it was a community pool, I remember going there with my cousins, and that truthfully was the only street over from where I grew up. I don’t know why I didn’t go there often but I think maybe because my family did like to go to the beach, we have a family beach house, is there anything else in particular, there’s little things like a family grocery, that my vovor would send me to the grocery store and back then you could send a 6 or 7 year old to the grocery store and that’s crossing the street and whatever my grandma wanted me to get, maybe she had a note, but I remember back then you could say put it on my grandmother’s bill.

Greenberg: Like a house account?

Parent: A house account, and at the end of the week I guess she’d pay it monthly, I have no clue what that was

Greenberg: Where was the grocery store located?

Parent: It was right, the main street that goes, I want to say, from, maybe it’s east to west is Wickenden street, and that’s the street that Fox Point is on, one street over from Scofield street I want to say that might, no that wasn’t Gano, Gano was down, I can’t remember the name of the street but its just one street over

Greenberg: Williams?

Parent: It wasn’t Williams, um, Ives street! Yeah, ok, Ives street, it was a market, it was a Portuguese market because we’re Portuguese, and I remember my grandmother would send me a lot of times for goat cheese, which, ew, but I remember one of it was goat cheese and another thing I remember was talk about time changing, that old aunt I had that lived in back of us she would send us to the store to get cigarettes and they would actually hand a 6 year old a pack of cigarettes, back then. Um, I remember going trick-or-treating and the big thing was to go to your area in Brown and um the houses near Benefit Street and I remember we all went there and that’s one thing I remember, um, I remember two streets down is the river and that’s the river that supposedly Roger Williams came up back in 16.... I don’t even know, 1600’s, I believe, you’re a Brown student you should know, isn’t there a statue right near your school somewhere, um, I don’t know is there anything in particular you wanted to know?

Greenberg: Um, so you said you’re Portuguese?

Parent: Both sides of my family are Portuguese

Greenberg: Ok, so, you said the market you shopped in was Portuguese?

Parent: I believe it was a Portuguese market, I don't remember the name of it at all.

Greenberg: Did most of the kids other than your cousins, were most of them Portuguese as well?

Parent: No, I do remember there was a girl I used to play with and her name was Lynn McElroy, so I'm guessing she was a nice Irish girl and she lived right on Wickenden street. And now that I say that, when I was maybe six or seven, or five, I don't remember, Wickenden Street was considered a fairly main street, not a main street, but it was the access to everything, um I got hit by a car and it was in the Providence Journal, luckily I was alright, I do know that the ambulance brought me to Rhode Island Hospital I was going to her house and running over without looking and crossing the street that I got hit by a car and I remember my poor mother was pregnant, and my brother was only a year younger than me, but luckily we lived in a neighborhood where she could leave my brother with someone, um, that's not funny, my parents both grew up I think I want to say on that same street, my father lived across the street, and I think that's how they had me, my mom and father had me when my mom was 16 and my father was 17, back then you had no choice, you, there was no choice, not saying that you should have a choice, but I think you should have a choice, um, so that's how they met, um but my father's parents came from Rochester, New York, um, but my father I think had, was in Providence Fox Point at least the 50's because I have a lot of 50's pictures, if you want to just stop and look at the pictures, that might help.

(Looking at pictures)

Parent: For instance, see this right here, this is my grandmother's house on Scofield Street and that's where I lived but do you see how I think its funny because I looked at these pictures, this is all the same front yard, that is the 40's, my great, that's my great-grandmother she had five children, and that's one of my aunts, and obviously they all came and when they came back from getting married it was her house and this is my mother and father and that's the front of the same house, and this is that church that I said, but then in the 60's this right here would have been, my mom and dad got married in 1960 and this is my brother and my cousin Michael

Greenberg: Is this in that same yard?

Parent: That same front yard! So every time I look at pictures, you can see now that's an old picture, that's the 40's, it's the same front yard, because those garages right there, my grandfather owned those pictures, and this, is right on the side of that house and what's funny is for as long as I remember it was a vacant lot, I don't know what was there before, they must have

torn down the house, and there's my father fishing, and the same front, and it's always the same part of that front yard that they take the picture of!

Greenberg: That's so funny. Wow these pictures are great.

Parent: Yeah, they really are, when my mother died I got these pictures. And again, the same front yard (pointing to a picture). And that's my brother and I. My mother was pregnant, so it must have been around when I got hit by the car, because I had a sister born in '66 but she died when she was 6 weeks old, and you know what's funny is you don't really talk a lot. (Points to another picture) and again, see the same front yard, different cousins, this is me.

Greenberg: Are you still close with your cousins?

Parent: Not really, once a year we'll have a family cookout, um, my mother's side of the family was the glue to that street, my vovov, my great grandmother, in fact I just recently went to my cousins house and she lives in Richmond, RI, which is very country. In fact across the street they have llamas, that's how country, and she was telling me that my grandmother, my great grandmother, she was like the matriarch, she was, she cared for anybody if anybody got sick. Back then they'd go to her house and she'd be the care taker and she was the one who owned that tenement house and she had five kids and we do try to once a year we try to get together at the Shriner's in Warwick, so I do see um, this side of the family, but my father's side of the family, like I said they came from Rochester, New York and a lot of them went to New Bedford, I don't know if you heard of New Bedford is a big community with a lot of Portuguese I guess because of the by the sea and Portuguese are supposed to be fisherman, but my father's side of the family I'm not close at all except for the one cousin who is in contact with your teacher, your professor.

Greenberg: Oh, ok.

Parent: She, um, she was a Pombo, and I really want to say that she is the only person, and her brother, I really don't talk to them, and if it wasn't for e-mailing I'd probably never communicate with her, she moved to New Hampshire, she is so into her roots and is trying so hard to find out things that happened in Fox Point, she's the person that contacted me with your teacher, um, but my other side of the family, what happened was that a lot of the Portuguese from Fox Point, when they were going to buy the single family house and move out, a lot of them went to East Providence, so I could say that I still have family in East Providence, Riverside, um, Rehoboth, if they were going to move out to the country, but as far as Fox Point, there's nobody in Fox Point anymore. In fact, I think that Brown university students probably make up the greater part of Fox Point now, don't they?

Greenberg: There are a fair amount of Brown students living there but also, in the neighborhood there's still a small amount of Cape Verdean's and Portuguese, definitely not as much as before.

Parent: I think there was a big transition in Fox Point growing up in Fox Point where it became very, the in thing to do, because of all the little cafes, and I think there's a gallery down the street, and it's funny because I think at that point, my grandmother, my father's mother, the side that I'm not very close with, she stayed and stayed in Fox Point until she basically died. She lived on top of a bakery, and I would, every once in a while, go and visit with my father, and it was so different going back to Fox Point because you went back to, you felt like you were going back to a poorer community, which basically at that time was, until then Brown came in and maybe even RISD and starting making, I mean I was really happy, because it made you feel better, like oh yeah, I came from Fox Point, instead of the part where you felt like you came from Fox Point it was a very poor community at one point.

(Looks back to the photos)

Greenberg: So we see a lot of pictures of the yard here, could you recall any details of what the interior of the apartment looked like?

Parent: I know um, a I can remember one thing about my grandmother's, my great grandmother's house, she had that old fashion machine, and you probably don't even remember this, and I think it's a hoot, and it had that washboard, and it was a machine, and on top I guess when you didn't have a spin cycle, it was a board where you had to turn it and turn it to squeeze out your laundry, oh I can't even imagine doing that, she did a lot of cooking I remember, because she lived downstairs, and we lived up stairs, at one point it was different, she lived down stairs. Just through the generations, they did a lot of different things, but she always cooked a lot of Portuguese food, and there's only one thing that I can cook and that's Portuguese soup

Greenberg: Ok, and how do you make Portuguese soup?

Parent: Oh, Portuguese soup. Basically, the vegetable you would use would be sweet potato and kale, um, and then linguisa cherise, I don't even know if I say it right, it's a sausage, polish people have kielbasa, um, Portuguese people have linguisa cherise, and potatoes, and red kidney beans, and it's the only thing that I have that's a Portuguese dish that I can make, sweet bread is very popular but you can just go to the bakery and get that. But I remember she use to make a lot of fish which I don't like, with bones in it. I like regular fish. But I remember when I was little she made a fish and I started choking because a bone got stuck in my throat and I was probably only 5 or 6 and I never wanted to eat fish, but I eat fish now without bones. There's not a lot, I remember playing outside with my brother, in the back of my grandmothers house, garages, don't ask me why but garages, there were two garages in the front of the house and two garages in back of the house and um because they were all made out of cement we'd always play in them and write with chalk and write on the little squares I remember that, I remember the Seekonk River was right near there, and that was dangerous. I remember my brother and I once

went down and we actually jumped in the river. If my mother and father even found that out we would have been in so much trouble, but there's a park that we used to go to all the time.

Greenberg: India Point Park?

Parent: India Point Park! Right, that's right, I was thinking of the other park that's on the east side, my parents used to bring us there, but you're right, there is a park there. Oh that's my phone, excuse me.

(Takes call- delete 17:43-)

Parent: The other thing I remember about the park is that I remember this big statue there, um, but we used to go to the other park, and I don't remember the name of that part but it was more on the east side and I remember a big Salvation Army building there

Greenberg: Oh yeah, that's still there

Parent: Is it? My father actually worked on the east side on that next street over, cause my father worked for a company called Lands Warehouse. It was a moving company, but it was also storage. My father did a lot of work for Brown University, I remember that, professors, coming and moving in the area, things like moving different buildings around. I do remember my father working there, there was a supermarket there too, I think it was called, I don't remember what it was called but I think that's where my mother went, I believe that's the east side, these considered the east side, um, the church, the church I went to was I believed called the Holy Ghost or the Holy Rosary, I made my first communion, I didn't find pictures of my first communion but I did find pictures of everybody, ok here's my parents standing on the steps in front of the steps at the church, um, it was a beautiful church, that one you can see right from 195 and that was considered the Portuguese church, but there's also a church, I want to say what did we say, Ives Street, that my cousins, these cousins right here they were half Italian. Their father would go every Sunday to that church and I would go every once in a while to their church and I don't remember what the name of that church was because it was their church not mine, but church is for everyone. Is there anything else in particular that...

Greenberg: What kind of jobs did your uncles hold?

Parent: My uncles? My grandfather was a carpenter, um my, one of my uncles he was more into the restaurant business, I remember they, maybe in the 70's and 80's, owned a few restaurants that was more towards the beach area, um, then my uncle Joe, he worked for a dry cleaners. He made a living out of dry cleaning. Then I had two aunts, they didn't work, most women stayed home and raised the kids. My father, like I said, he worked at Lands Warehouse, it was a moving company, my, I, ya know, I never knew what my great grandmother did that she bought a house when she first came to the country, because that's why they would say, when I first came to the country. I know there was a lot of factory work. I know my grandmother

worked in a lot of different factories, I know she worked at, um, they made rubber gloves. I can't even remember what the name of that company was. My grandfather, I have no idea when he was born, he was, I want to say, I don't ever remember him working.

Greenberg: Other than the Portuguese store you went to, do you remember any other stores or business around the area you grew up in?

Parent: I don't think Fox Point had any stores as far as clothing. I just remember that market, I just remember that one market, I know on the corner for Wickenden and Ives there was an antique store and that was my father's really good friend but I don't know if I went into that store when we moved to west Warwick or when we lived in Providence but I remember it was an antique store, but now they probably have a few antique stores there, um, I know, I can remember a liquor store, you know now that I think about it. Aren't there codes about having a liquor store right across from an elementary school? I don't know now that I think about it.

Greenberg: Do you remember bars?

Parent: I was just going to say they wouldn't call them bars, they'd call them social clubs, and I remember there was a Portuguese social club right on Gano street. In fact I think there's two of them, but now that they're doing the highway I think they might have knocked down one of them, but now that I think about it there were a few bars I believe. I'm trying to remember. I was a little kid so it wasn't big on my list. I remember the bakery that we'd always go to that was further down that was more near Williams or Transit Street. I remember those names. I think my father one time said he lived on Williams Street when he was a kid but I'm not sure, and I'd ask my father but my father has a hard time hearing and he does have a hearing aid but refuses to put it in so communication is difficult with him and my mother, she died really young, at age 50, so I was so busy in my life with my kids, my kids are 28 and 23 that I didn't ask for oral history which now I'm regretting because my great grandmother, the one who came from Portugal to America, she had 5 kids, and I just realize when I was talking to you and getting the pictures that my aunt is the last of five. My Aunt Dottie who's my godmother, and that was another thing because being Catholic, all aunts are godmothers to this one and that one, no you're not Catholic? So that was really big, catholic, church, but as each generation came, it just, we just go to church less and less. I don't go to church at all where my grandparents had crosses on the wall and things like that.

Greenberg: Can you recall what your grandparent's house looked like?

Parent: Um, my grandfather, see that's such a difficult thing, that you would think where did my grandfather live?

Greenberg: Oh, I thought you said he lived across the street?

Parent: That was great grandmother; my father's grandparents lived across the street.

Greenberg: So what did their house look like?

Parent: It was a tenement house, big rooms, the thing that I think when I look back no shower, just a bathtub, the claw foot tubs. I remember they always had the front entrance and the back entrance and you never went through this entrance, and when you say that, I can't remember where my mother's father lived. That was his mother's house that we lived in but I want to say that was maybe when he moved to Seekonk. I don't remember why I don't remember that.

Greenberg: In your house, how many people did you share a bathroom with?

Parent: When we had that, it was a one-bedroom apartment. That's one of the reasons why, when my mother was pregnant with my sister, we would, my mother and father bought their first house it was one bedroom and I'm guessing that's why I said that when I first came home I must have lived in the attic for a little, they made it into a room, because they made it into a real bathroom with a shower, in fact there's a picture of me and my brother in the bathtub. I guess everyone takes pictures of their kids in the bathroom, oh and there's my brother with the dog, you can barely see, but I was just telling the kids that I do day care, the dog's name was Bandit and at the time there was a cartoon called Johnny Quest, and that's on right now. They make remakes of it, and my dog, my brother took the dog, and we kept hearing the toilet flush, and flush, and I told the kids, we don't know to this day what made my brother put the puppy in the toilet and just keep on flushing, oh this is a great picture, look how old.

Greenberg: Was the puppy ok?

Parent: Bandit was ok, oh and this is another thing, this was the aunt that lived in the back street, she was one of five and she lived in the back street but their front yard would be adjacent to our front yard but we could climb over a wall and I remember always as a kid climbing over that wall and that was just a picture of what she would do, she would always be in her kitchen washing dishes or doing that. She always had a dish towel in her and someone must have said something to her and I feel like I remember this and I was always five, she, somebody must have said something about the dish towel and she put it on her head and just made us all laugh, it's just a funny picture. (Goes through photos) Oh, but I remember this Christmas. Oh, here's another story I told, because my mother and father, like I said were a very young couple, one bedroom, and I just told the kids this story. One year my brother and I had asked for bikes for Christmas and there's a picture of us in the front yard with the bikes and because we stayed in bunk beds in one room and my mother and father slept on a couch that pulled out to a bed, and the Christmas tree was in the living room with their bed/couch, and when we woke up the next morning my brother and I went to look at the tree and there were no Christmas presents at all and to this day I can remember such, we were bad? I can't believe how bad we were! And my mother, "No, no, no, Santa Clause couldn't put the stuff under the tree!" and then in the kitchen

there were my brother and I both got a brand new bike and there were all our Christmas presents, and that was just something that was very traumatic. (Looks at photos)- my mother.

Greenberg: So the presents were all in the kitchen?

Parent: Yes, we got our bikes and all our presents, we were so materialistic, and I can see this picture right here. This is Easter, but those are my grandparents, now that I'm looking at the picture, he moved to Seekonk, um, and that's one of the parks, I can tell that's Easter too. Because I have my Easter bonnet on.

Greenberg: So where would you go shopping for your clothes?

Parent: The big thing, we would go downtown, and we would say down city, and I don't know why it's down city,

Greenberg: Would you walk?

Parent: My parents always had a car, but my grandmother, my father's mother, we would take the bus, to this day I wouldn't have a clue how to take a bus, you'd go by the bus stop signs, but that's how she got around, by bus, I remember we'd go by bus and we'd go down city um, but, when we would go clothes shopping for school there was the Outlet, that was the big store to go to.

Greenberg: Do you remember where that was, Westminster?

Parent: It was probably Westminster, or Weybosset, but that's where you'd go to get anything, you'd go down city um, but then in the 70's that's when they built the first malls, and that's the mall but by then I lived in West Warwick so the mall was right down the road, I know we did a lot of beach things you'd look forward to going to beach every weekend.

Greenberg: Which beach did you go to?

Parent: Um, my family had a my grandfather, I don't remember that I was too young, but my uncle had a house in East Poutonick, do you know where that is?

Greenberg: I've been to Narragansett

Parent: Oh Narragansett, I guess it was even further south.

Greenberg: So you'd drive?

Parent: Yeah, like I said, my parents always had a car, at least one car but then when we moved to West Warwick we always had two cars. I guess that was the progressive thing to do, tenement house, one car, out into the country, two cars, I mean they did what they could.

Greenberg: So when you went to the beach, would you go with your whole family? Cousins, uncles?

Parent: Yes, when we would go to the beach you'd see everybody there, there was the one beach house we'd go to after to have our cookouts, but yeah, we'd all meet on the beach.

Greenberg: And would you eat Portuguese food?

Parent: That's the thing, back then and I tried to figure this out, when you were an immigrant and came to this country, you try to be American.

Greenberg: Americanized?

Parent: I want to say, how come my aunts didn't talk Portuguese or speak Portuguese? I remember my great grandmother my mother finally explained it to me, when you're an immigrant and you come to this country you want to be Americanized so when you're in school and you're in second grade, third grade, high school, you want to drop, you want to be like everybody else, and it's sad because I'd love to be able to speak Portuguese. My father and mother said they could understand when their grandparents were talking but they couldn't speak it and it's sad you should always keep your heritage if you can your customs. There isn't one Portuguese custom at Christmas that I could tell you, the only thing we do is in Fall River and New Bedford, have and this is how my grandmother would say it, Portuguese time, we've gone there, and in west Warwick there's actually a big Portuguese time that we go to and that's the closest I can get to my heritage and they still have a truck to this day with chickens and Portuguese bread and stuff from peoples gardens. It looks like in the earlier pictures that my grandmother had gardens, when I was a kid. I don't remember gardens other than her roses but it looks like the old times, is that they say would grow vegetables.

Greenberg: But all the apartments and tenement house all had yards with grass?

Parent: My grandmother had a pretty good sized yard front and back. Not compared to around here but I remember playing a lot across the street, you know what do remember, maybe the 60's maybe that's part of the decay, empty parking lots with gravel and stone, so I think maybe if you played baseball you played in the parking lot I do remember playing, being able to ride my bike, but the end of Scofield street was a huge wall, that's probably why we could ride our bike, a huge wall, then it was 195, I remember one thing I tell my kids, because 195 was so close, I think there's probably only 3 tenement houses. On the side of use there was a huge accident and I remember one night being so afraid and the car had rolled over and it was on fire you could hear all the rescues and I remember being little and really being afraid. To me I thought I was in danger, I remember that, but as a far as playing, I remember playing baseball, riding bikes, but the big thing I remember now that I think about it was catching grasshoppers in that vacant lot on the side of our house, there were a lot of grasshoppers.

Greenberg: So in this picture, who was that?

Parent: Um, that on the back, now whoever's pictures this was it was really great because they named all the names, um, my oh they don't have the last names, yeah it looks like somebody came home from the service and I think his name was Manuel Santos

Greenberg: Was that a name from your family?

Parent: I don't know who that is, um I'm reading it, it says uncle Pete, um, Mike's there in the back right there, that's my great- my grandfather Mike, it looks like he might have a uniform on, but that was the, that was the thing to do, if you could join the army or be of service to your country and you were an immigrant. I know my grandmother was so proud, in fact, I think now a days we don't hang picture of our presidents and then my great-grandmother's living room was a picture of John F. Kennedy, one of those portraits of John F. Kennedy I'm guessing she was just so proud to be an American.

Greenberg: That's interesting, because she certainly came with her heritage being Portuguese, she could speak Portuguese?

Parent: Yes, she could speak Portuguese and speak English, and the fact that she had a picture, and it was a big picture, it was a picture 10 by 13, of the president, I want to say it was John F. Kennedy, because it would have been, no it was John F. Kennedy

Greenberg: Um, so have you been back to Fox Point since you've moved?

Parent: I've been to, the park, and that was probably 15 years ago, not India Point Street Park, the other park, I've been, driving by, maybe Wickenden Street, what they did was, um, where my father's father or father's mother lived, they built a high-rise for seniors so I think my grandmother was in that house of a little while so that was probably 15 years ago too. I've been there, just driving by, just like I told you, my cousin who is only 28 but he's my first cousin, he just graduated Brown maybe 4 years ago so I was back in the area, I used to love to go to Thayer Street and go to the restaurants, but that's not Fox Point that's Thayer street.

Greenberg: How do you feel about, like, how do you feel about the neighborhood you lived in? If you were to visit now, do you think it would spark any emotions?

Parent: It's strange because I have been, I can't say if it was two or three years ago I drove by the area for something and it's just so funny because they say when you go back to something things look so small and it looks so small compared, because I was so small, and I think wow, that's just so, that's only around the corner and that only there? I haven't been back, I really wanted to go to that Fox Point exhibit I wish I had. Do you know is that an ongoing thing or is that all over?

Greenberg: I think it was just that one time but I think that since it was an exhibit it might still be up in the school but you can certainly get a lot of information like that through our class.

Parent: Through your class? I saw

Greenberg: There's a website also with a lot of photos

Parent: Right, my, that's how I saw that my cousin, I guess one of the biggest um contributors, is a guy named Lou Costa, I've seen that, I asked my father if he knew him and my father said he doesn't remember him um and I've tried to say names to my father do you remember this? But besides hearing, he's become old and ornery, I joke and say he's just old and ornery and he's truthfully not that old, he's 67.

Greenberg: So did your father, before, did he ever tell you about any memories he had about Fox Point? Or your mother?

Parent: No, not at all. That's the part that I miss, every once in a while my father will say something to me and I'll say gee why didn't you tell that to us when we were kids we would have had a better understanding. For instance, um, his father was a very ornery person and I just remember my grandfather not being happy and my father told me this just maybe 5 years ago. His father lived on a farm in New York and his father um, he was that last of the brothers to come to America because there was an elderly grandmother that lived in Portugal, in the Azores, which is an island, and when my grandfather's parents came over, he had to stay with the elderly grandmother and all his brothers got to go come over and when they finally did come they went to New York and there he had his farm. And he loved goats and chickens but then I think, I guess with any economy like now you have to go where there's work and I guess that's why there was a big surge which was Fox Point area, Fall River, New Bedford, and his family had to move yet again and he had to move away and when he came here he was so unhappy he wanted to stay at his farm and I said to my father when I was small and they lived across the street if he had tried to explain that to us maybe we would have realized why he was like that, um My father, my mother's father, he was a carpenter and I remember him he was in the service, not that I remember when he was in the service but I remember how he um, as a teenage, my mother went to Hope High school, is that still there?

Greenberg: Yes, that's still there.

Parent: So is that considered Fox Point?

Greenberg: No, that's the east side.

Parent: Oh, so if you lived in Fox Point right now and you went to high school, you'd still go to Hope High School?

Greenberg: Yeah I think Fox Point only has that elementary school.

Parent: I've always wondered that, if we hadn't moved how, why, how would I have been at Hope High School as opposed to west Warwick High School, what my life would have been different, I do think that.

Greenberg: Did you stay in touch with anybody, any of your friends from Fox Point?

Parent: The only girl I remember was Lynn McElroy, she had a few older brothers, I had an uncle Mickey, he's in some of these pictures, he goes back to um, Providence that social club, the Portuguese social club, I don't know if he goes now but he knows a lot of guys that are from the, that's what they'll say too. The Point, they won't say Fox Point, they'll say The Point. Um, that's just an expression, I don't use that expression, now that I think about it, the older people use that expression

Greenberg: I know you were there when you were really young but do you, do you remember feeling like there was a big sense of community when you lived there?

Parent: Because my relatives all lived on the same street, that part I did. I remember my fath- my parents, everybody knew families and my father will still be able to recall certain families and most of them were Portuguese but other than that, I don't remember too much. I don't remember too much of school either, I always did well, I remember I liked painting, back then you get, they had these manila papers that I was just, huge, they would be on easels and I remember that was my favorite part was when we got to paint and my father's brother who still lived with my grandmother at the time, which is another story, had my father explain why my uncle was in that, still living with my grandmother at the time, if he would explain why he was so down, and now if he would explain when he was in the war he was in Japan and he was on leave and he struck and killed a pedestrian and he never recovered from that. I guess maybe you wouldn't tell a 7 year old but maybe if you told a 15 year old they'd understand. My father just told this to me 5 years ago, and it just puts a better perspective on what it was like growing up, that was something he should have told us and maybe we could have understood things a little bit better.

Greenberg: Did you feel like when you were younger you didn't understand why your grandfather acted a certain way? Or your uncle?

Parent: Right, I really wouldn't want to portray this as such a negative but for a lot of people it was negative just like what the economy is now. You'll look back on history and see a lot of people having big problems just because of the economy and I guess that's what it was like in the 60's and 70's or 70's was a really bad time, you weren't even born yet. What year were you born?

Greenberg: I was born in 1987

Parent: I was going to say, my daughter was born in 1986, she just graduated from Johnson and Wales, in fact, she works on The Hill, that's the point, the hill, Federal Hill, she works for lawyers, she's a paralegal, but that was the goal for each generation to do better. You're from New York? I know you don't want to hear this, I'm interviewing you now! Is there anything else? Food, I remember I was very fashionable.

Greenberg: I mean I can tell by the photos, that's why I asked the question about clothing,

Parent: Um, my mother always dressed us really well, for Easter, Christmas, school pictures, she always took good care of what we looked like. One of the things I always laughed, you can see this picture right here, my hair is past my waistline, my mother never let me wear my hair down like that, my hair always had to be up, um, you can see here my hair was short but always in a ponytail, my mother took very good care of us, I can tell in this (picture) it was Christmas because that's my velvet dress and those are my cousins that lived across the street.

Greenberg: Wow, they look very different from you and your brother.

Parent: Yeah, they're half Italian, this one right here that's Anita, she lived out, in California in San Diego right now.

Greenberg: This picture has a note on it, have you read it?

Parent: No, (reading), oh Bobby, that's my father,

Greenberg: Do you want to read it?

Parent: She always had a crush on my father, I should read it first. It says, "Bobby- I don't know what I would do if you hadn't married my favorite cousin. You two are like my big sister and brother, stay the great person you are and you shouldn't have any trouble in life, god bless, love Nita." See, I should give this to my father, it is his, my mother must have had that. Um I would say that, her side of the family, my mother's side, of the family, would have been the first ones to graduate high school, I know on my fathers side I'm the first one who even went to college and that was only 2 years, I think my cousin Sophie, the one who got in contact with your teacher, she might have a bachelors degree, that's another thing, graduating high school was just a big thing then, never mind going to college, that's the thing I want for my kids, to go to college. I can see my mother in that picture right there she's pregnant, so this is probably when we moved out, but did you see the difference, these are all black and white and then you got color. This is me, this is a great picture of me naked, before you went into the beach house you had to take outdoor showers to get all the sand off of us, (looks at another picture) and that's a Christmas picture that's what made me think of that Christmas story.

Greenberg: So, would your mom cut your hair or would you go to a salon?

Parent: No I remember we would go to the salon and again you'd go down city to do that, a lot of things were in the city.

Greenberg: What other things did you do in the city?

Parent: There was the outlet, um, I don't remember a lot I just remember we would go to parks. My parents would take us to Slater Park but I think that's in Pawtucket, (points to photo) there's my father, right down at the very point with the bridges and the river, his friend had a bait shop, but that might have been on the border of East Side and Fox Point and um it was Bentencourt, Frankie Bentencourt's bait shop. And I remember some times, my father would go there and you would just go around and father liked to fish and I think there was a picture with my father and this huge fish but he doesn't fish anymore, he hasn't fished in ages, my brother likes to fish, my brother still fishes.

Greenberg: So for dinner at night, would you eat just with your parents and brother or would you eat with your whole family?

Parent: No I think just on weekends we would eat with my grandmother, my great grandmother, I keep on saying my grandmother, my grandmother raised my mother, so I always say my grandmother but it was actually my great grandmother. When my mother was born, my mother was born in 1944, and her father was in the service, whatever war we were at, and, her mother which is so cruel, her mother left her and my uncle and my grandmother raised her and she ended up having her own family, which is very sad, but if you didn't have that core family where you have your aunt, your uncles your cousins all together my mother might have a different life, but because of family and they were so close.

Greenberg: So what kind of things did you have for dinner other than fish?

Parent: My great grandmother made fish, I remember the Portuguese soup which I have, um, she made this other soup that I've never I've never seen this other before and ever again, it's pea soup with big, big pieces of egg in it, and I don't even know if that's Portuguese, she'd make a lot of bread pudding, back then you wouldn't throw away bread, so she would always get the rest of bread, the rest of the bread, and I guess it's rice not bread pudding, and you put raisins in it and cinnamon, I remember that, but as far as my mother cooking, I don't remember too much of my mother, I don't remember a lot of things, there's only, my daughter tells me she remembers nothing of her childhood, and I say to her why? It's a good thing I have thousands of pictures to remind her and if it wasn't for my pictures I would remember a lot of things I just remember one time my brother's birthday party, um, and this is silly, and my brother to this day will tell me, you laughed all over my cake, I remember having a birthday and we're all around and my brother's going to blow out the candles and I had grape or orange soda, I was drinking it, and someone said something funny, and when you go like that, I kind of spit all over his cake, and to this day he'll tell me you spit on my cake! We were six years old!

Greenberg: So what's the age difference between you and your brother?

Parent: My brother and I are only 15 months apart, not that much, and I wonder how much my brother remembers of Fox Point.

Greenberg: I mean, you certainly remember a lot.

Parent: I think I remember a lot of little different things.

Greenberg: Well those are the kind of things that mean a lot.

Parent: I guess at the time it had to have been really important, whether you were scared, happy, it had to have been a huge emotion for you to remember it, so when my daughter tells me she doesn't remember anything. (Points to a picture) See this picture right here, you know when I said Frankie Bentencourt had a um?

Greenberg: Yeah

Parent: That boat was right outside his bait shop and I think there were rocks or big boulders and you'd go down to the river and I remember my father taking that picture of me. But one of the things I do remember too was 1965, my father was one of the first guys in the neighborhood to buy a 1965 ½ he said, red mustang convertible.

Greenberg: Oh wow!

Parent: And I remember when he came back with it from I want to say Tesco-Ford which is in east Providence I remember everybody coming out who ever lived across the street because that was a really nice car, I did have pictures of that I don't know where that is. My cousin Sophie who got in contact, I think she sent in one of these pictures, this apartment was near Gano Street but I don't remember what street she lived on but I'm sure she's told people but see my mother, that's me and that's my brother, my brother's wearing a little sailor suit, and I have a little sailor dress on, so my mother was really into fashion. Well she tried to keep us fashionable. That right there, that's my great grandmother, who I would call vovor. There's that wall. Remember I said on the side of the house there was a wall, now see those houses their address would have been the street behind Scofield Street but I really don't know what street that is, taken about 3 weeks after Easter in 1963. And that's my cousin Donna she graduated URI and that was big.

(Takes out a map)

Parent: That's Wickenden, ok, I think one time my father lived on Brook Street, and that's Gano Street, and here's Ives, ok so Wickenden, Ives, so right here now is where I think the Boys Club is, which wasn't there when I was there so this I believe was the first street. This is Scofield after Ives and that street back there it doesn't say what it is, but I did have an aunt who lived back there. Like I said back there everybody would live in small little one bedroom

apartments, what I'm doing now, I feel like I'm coming full circle I don't know what my daughters, going to buy a house but whatever. The reason I moved here is because my son, he lives right here on this street that main street (points out window). Right there, he has a house and because I take care of grandkids, which is important to me, so maybe that's why family is for some people more than others. I take care of my grandkids two days a week, because their parents work full time. My daughter in-law is a legal secretary. And people say oh you don't work? And I say I work around them, I think it's my privilege to be part of raising my grandkids, as you can see there are the grandkids all over (points to photos around the house) they're 3 and nine months. That's one of the reasons why I moved here. To me, family is everything. My kids, speaking of kids, my daughter, she's just getting out of work now. Anything? Now as far as family recipes like I said I only have that one soup I can make but again we wanted to be Americanized so we didn't want to eat a lot of Portuguese things, um, there's a Portuguese like I said in New Bedford that they have and it's called Portuguese time and maybe about seven years ago I went with my father and I made my daughter go and they had this really really nice buffet type of place where you could go get food and I wouldn't even try it and I eat anything. Rabbit, goat, then the fish that's salted, it's dry fish. So we didn't want to try that, and I still don't want to try it, but there are some Portuguese things that I like. There's a pork dish and potatoes and I don't know how to make that and I don't recall my grandparents making it but I do go to a Portuguese restaurant every so often in East Providence, Madeira. Great Portuguese food. Um, Portuguese use a lot of sea food, so there's one dish, and I don't recall my grandparents making it, with quahogs and red sauce with pork, I'm wondering if they made it and I just wouldn't eat it, I don't now. A generation of chicken noodle soup Campbell's, which is terrible, um, but there's a lot of things I don't remember. Is there anything else?

Greenberg: No I think that's great.

Parent: As far as the pictures, if there's anything in particular you want to take.